What We Heard

A Learning Alberta submissions & consultations

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Introduction:

The following provides an overview of stakeholder feedback received on documents produced for the *A Learning Alberta* review. Feedback was sought via the internet (e-mail submissions to *A Learning Alberta* Steering Committee, formal written submissions provided to the Steering Committee) as well as through a face-to-face consultation process. The following paper accounts for feedback received to September 16, 2005. Feedback is reported along policy directions (themes) highlighted by stakeholders.

Theme 1: Learner centred

Stakeholders focused on the need to enhance responsiveness to a diversity of learners (i.e. older students, Aboriginal students, rural students, and those disadvantaged socio-economically). Students need to have access to a wide array of tools to support informed decision-making regarding their choice of programs and career path (i.e. academic requirements). Raising awareness about opportunities/different pathways as well as the importance of higher education is critically important for both students and parents. Also crucial to a learner centered system is ensuring students are not burdened with unpredictable tuition increases or unreasonable debt from student loans. The system needs to ensure financial manageability.

Challenges to learner centredness:

Overall quality. Most stakeholders defined a learner centred system as high quality, dynamic and continually improving. Respondents consider achieving this type of system a formidable challenge. For many, the availability of space, programming opportunities (regardless of geography, demographic characteristics), and financial capacity are current obstacles.

Affordability, funding issues for students. For many, a major barrier to affordability is high tuition. Some students feel the cost of advancing an education outweighs perceived benefits. Several argued that the availability of student assistance is insufficient to entice prospective learners to advance their education. Additionally, many student stakeholders believed definitions of a moderate standard of living and manageable debt levels have changed dramatically in recent years and it is questionable whether available student assistance has kept pace.

Funding issues for institutions. Some of our institutional stakeholders pointed to their own unique set of circumstances such as lack of resources, geography and complexity of the learning system as major challenges.

Accessibility for underrepresented groups. Many highlighted the importance of increasing participation rates among groups currently underrepresented in the system:

Aboriginal people, rural populations, people from low-income families, Albertans with disabilities. Most painted a holistic picture of the system, feeling that the overarching goal of the system should be to assist motivated individuals to advance their education. One major challenge identified in meeting the goal of increasing participation/access was to significantly enhance transitions to post-secondary among Alberta high school students (from approximately 50% six years after graduation to approximately 75% six years after graduation).

Recognition and support of non-traditional learning methods & spaces. Stakeholder support and recognition of non-traditional learning methods, and delivery is a challenge. A system that is learner centred offers a wide range of quality opportunities in a variety of program areas and providers, including: the traditional institution, distance education, community programs, and skills upgrading opportunities set at work or accessible from home.

Awareness. Several respondents identified low student and public awareness of available opportunities and actual costs attributable to advanced education.

Technology. There is recognition that technology is an important tool, but should not be viewed as a complete solution to access and quality. Also, there is recognition that technology actually poses challenges for some learners (i.e. in terms of familiarity).

Suggested strategies to enhance learner centredness:

Funding for students. Many focused on the role of student assistance. Some suggested income contingent student loan repayment plans, and others advocated increases in resources to support basic living allowances. Other suggestions included exempting scholarships and other assets as income in calculating a loan award, as well as reducing the expected parental contribution in calculating a student's loan award. Additionally, some argued for an expansion in value of tax credits for students. Some believed in targeted financial incentives for historically underrepresented groups, perhaps as tuition rebates, larger loan allocations, provision of bursaries/grants or reduced tuition levels. Others recommended enticing private sector contribution toward educational or program fees (via tax incentives).

Support of partnerships. Many stakeholders supported more collaboration and partnership as a means to enhance access, and as a means to ensure resources are used more efficiently. Many felt it was important to encourage a holistic system-wide approach, encourage and reward collaborative arrangements and also to encourage integrated planning. Further, there is a need to support greater alignment and consistency between advanced education and social services aid (i.e. consistent web interfaces for various government social programs and student financial assistance).

Awareness strategies. Most respondents suggested a need to dramatically increase the reach of advanced education awareness programs to all Alberta K-12 students. This

could be a logical way to educate students on program demand, job opportunities, spaces available, and academic requirements. It is recognized that a key first step in enhancing participation rates is to create a learning culture. Albertans need to understand the importance of an advanced education. Some stakeholders suggested a provincial public awareness campaign. Awareness about opportunities available at rural and small urban colleges would be of particular benefit to rural learners. Many stakeholders pointed to a centralized application system as a less confusing and viable alternative to the many institutional application systems. Finally, there was acknowledgement that job placement is not the only goal of advancing education. It should be emphasized that advanced education enhances citizenship, strengthens culture, and improves quality of life.

Tuition fee policy. Respondents supported changing Alberta's Tuition Fee Policy in numerous ways. Some suggested that a tuition fee policy could be modified by tying tuition to family income. Others want to lower tuition significantly and develop a sustainable formula to determine tuition in the future, while others advocated allowing market forces to drive tuition costs. Some wanted a "re-working" of the cost sharing principle with the aim to reduce the share students pay via increasing the responsibility of government or the taxpayer.

International tuition fee policy. Further, it was suggested that it would be of benefit to conduct an in-depth study and analysis of the Tuition Fee Policy with respect to international students to determine the pros and cons of maintaining the current policy. Any policy changes should be considered in the broader context of immigration, skill shortages, and expanding Alberta's profile internationally.

Focus on strategies to attract and retain high quality faculty. Institutional participants tended to focus on strategies that would attract and retain talented faculty and instructors to work in Alberta.

Recognition of non-traditional learning pathways. Stakeholders pointed to the need for an increased recognition of the role and value of non-credit programs and services offered in a variety of settings. Many pointed out that much learning occurs in non-formal settings outside the traditional institutions. Some advocated spending on programs and opportunities offered through the Supernet and related distance and online education opportunities. Others put forth the position that individual institutions are in the best position to ensure the most appropriate response to their community's learning needs. It is important to work toward a more integrated advanced education system, where students are supported at multiple entry points (upgrading or college preparation for example, as well as throughout the learning process). There also should be enhanced culturally-appropriate programming for all underrepresented groups.

Theme 2: Equitable Access to Learning

A more accessible system with supported entry points was a common theme in many of the submissions. There were a variety of challenges noted as well as strategies suggested toward improving transitions into, within, and out of Alberta's advanced education system.

Challenges Equitable Access:

Low participation. Some respondents were explicit in their use of statistics to demonstrate Alberta's comparatively low participation rate. Many highlighted the need to increase participation rates among new immigrants and Albertans from historically underrepresented groups. Some submissions identified a significant challenge to provide necessary supports (English as a Second Language (ESL), for example) to create a culture of accessibility among disadvantaged populations.

Prosperous economy. Alberta's booming resource economy was identified as a challenging or competing alternative to advanced education.

System efficiency. In general, respondents felt it a critical challenge to reduce student turnover, improve transitions, improve transferability and to encourage on-time completion. One respondent highlighted the challenge as establishing clear and relevant links between advanced education opportunities, as well as the need for industry in fostering transitions.

Suggested strategies to enhance equitable access:

Awareness campaigns. Many submissions pointed to concerted awareness campaigns targeted to inform prospective students of career programs, or technical programs in addition to the more traditional academic programs. Some suggested advanced education awareness strategies should be incorporated into the K-12 school system earlier on to inform more youth of the importance of advanced education. One submission suggested hiring more guidance counselors that are knowledgeable about all aspects of advanced education including the costs and benefits and available opportunities.

Targeted recruitment. Targeted recruitment strategies could take into account the changing learner profile and be geared toward three groups: traditional students (18-24 year olds), adult learners, and life long learners who seek to advance their education.

Changing system structure. One submission put forth the idea of a universal K-14, or K-12++ system, which would feature two years of compulsory post-secondary education after grade 12 (similar to Quebec).

Involvement of new professionals. It was suggested that new professionals engage in facilitating access to learning opportunities for underrepresented learners. New professionals could act as representative facilitators and share experiences, lessons learned, and benefits with new immigrants and Albertans historically underrepresented in our system to encourage transition into the system.

Collaboration in research. Joint research projects (government and stakeholders) could be conducted at increasing the knowledge base on Alberta's participation rate and transitions of all Albertans, in general, and new immigrants and Albertans historically underrepresented in the system.

General system collaboration. A few submissions suggested offering guaranteed spaces in certificate, diploma, and degree opportunities after students have completed preparatory courses. Similarly, a few other submissions advocated that there should be no "dead ends" in the system, meaning there is a logical progression toward lifelong learning at every point. For example, an upgrading program should lead into a college preparatory program and on to life long learning. Laddering should be a key feature of the system.

Common application system. Some saw a common application system as an integral part of a more efficient system allowing for the collection of system-wide data on applications and also on transitions into, within, and through the advanced education system. It also provides prospective students with information on opportunities available.

Arrangements with industry and the K-12 system. There was support for further development of collaborative arrangements between Advanced Education, industry and the secondary school system to provide more entry and exit points for prospective and exiting students. Also, it was suggested that on-time completion be rewarded with some incentive to increase turnover and maximize the capacity of the system.

Theme 3: Partnerships and collaboration

The need for collaboration and the formation of partnerships (public, private, non-profit) was highlighted by many institutions and not-for-profit groups. There was a high degree of consensus on the point that collaboration must be rewarded and funded. Additionally, many applaud the work carried out by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfers

(ACAT). There were a variety of challenges noted, as well as strategies suggested toward improving partnerships and collaboration.

Challenges to partnerships and collaboration:

Institutional dependency. The high degree of institutional dependency on government and low degree of private and not-for profit-sector partnering is a challenge. Additionally, some felt over-governance is an issue arguing the number of differing government steering and funding mechanisms sometimes leads to confusion and inefficiency.

Competition. Some believed a major system-wide challenge is the degree of competition for enrolment within the system. This is in contrast to a system that more collectively serves student, economic, and societal needs.

Incentives for collaboration. Many believed a challenge facing government will be to identify and implement the proper incentive structure to persuade and encourage collaborative arrangements.

Suggested strategies to enhance partnerships and collaboration:

Higher degree of inter-ministry coordination. Stakeholders felt more consolidation across government departments in terms of programming, policies, and funding programs would demonstrate a government effort toward collaboration and system integration. One stakeholder suggested that government has a role in providing better linkages between private sector human resources planning and advanced education strategies to address perceived and potential skill shortages.

Expansion of degree opportunities. Many suggested expanding degree opportunities available at colleges as a strategy to increase collaboration and partnerships. Similarly, a few stakeholders felt our larger institutions have the capacity needed for degree program development and simply need incentives to increase partnering arrangements with smaller urban and rural colleges as access points. Some stakeholders suggested more integrated educational programming. A few stakeholders suggested collaborative arrangements should be funded in a more equitable fashion to encourage smaller institutions to engage in these arrangements. One stakeholder saw a remote campus model for distance education and e-learning as an attractive model where individuals may access a host of programs from an assortment of provincial institutions from existing buildings within their home community.

Improved incentive structure for engaging in partnerships. Stakeholders suggested that an improved incentive structure would contribute toward realizing the Campus Alberta vision. Tax incentives could be offered for private companies to donate equipment. Others suggested increasing programs with cooperative and work experience components could lead to more partnering and collaboration among advanced education providers and various economic sectors.

System-wide planning. Some stakeholders suggested the best strategy for increasing system partnering and collaboration was through system-wide planning. One stakeholder suggested more opportunities for face-to-face meetings and planning sessions. They believed this would lead to the development of a holistic system culture and help curb institutional competitiveness in favour of collaboration and integration. Additionally, one stakeholder suggested integrated development plans toward creating system strategies geared toward meeting the longer term and emerging needs of learners. A few stakeholders argued organizations like the Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes and the newly formed Alberta Universities Association have an important role to play toward collaborative planning.

Theme 4: Internationally focused system

Stakeholders ranging from universities to small rural colleges highlighted the economic and social value of creating a more internationally focused education system in Alberta. Feedback focused not only on attracting and retaining international students but encouraging Alberta students to seek out international experiences. There were a variety of challenges noted as well as suggestions to improve Alberta's international education profile.

Challenges to an internationally focused system:

Perceptions. Some Albertans do not recognize the economic and/or social value of encouraging immigrants/foreign students to pursue their education in the province. There is a need to raise awareness about the benefits of immigration and foreign students and in turn create a more welcoming environment.

Prior-learning recognition. Many foreign-trained professionals come to Canada and Alberta with work experience and foreign educational credentials. However, since many foreign credentials are not recognized in Alberta, highly trained immigrants are held back from contributing their expertise. Many seek lower paying and/or unsatisfying employment while attempting to gain English language skills and meet employment or educational requirements.

English as a Second Language (ESL) training. Current funding for language training is not sufficient for a number of learners. It was noted by one ESL provider that one of the key barriers to immigrants entering the workforce is a low level of language skills. Many need more than the two years of support provided by the federal and provincial programs. This situation may result in the learner entering post-secondary at a lower level than they are capable of (to receive more language training).

Coordination of services for immigrants and foreign students. There were concerns raised that the services immigrants need to access are disjointed and uncoordinated, as policies, programs and funding arrangements involve a number of government departments, industry, and post-secondary institutions.

Federal funding inequity. Federal government funding (through Citizenship and Immigration Canada) for the provinces has remained static in recent years, although demand for assistance has increased substantially. Also, the federal government only "tops up" provincial funding to provinces whose annual share of immigrants is lower than 5 per cent. Alberta does not receive this "top up" funding.

Suggested strategies for a more internationally focused system:

Raising public awareness. There is a need to shift the thinking of some Albertans and to educate the public about the benefits of attracting and retaining immigrants in Alberta. The attitude needs to change from perceiving foreign students as a "burden" to viewing them as a "benefit" to the province.

Recruitment strategies. As well as modifying the perceptions of Albertans, it has been suggested that Alberta lead an international recruitment of students from abroad and encourage them to study and work in the province.

Differential fees. Some respondents felt that foreign students may be deterred from entering post-secondary in Alberta because of the high differential fees charged (foreign students generally pay twice as much). However, it was also noted that Alberta's fees are still low by international standards.

Financial assistance options. It has been suggested that it may be of benefit to expand financial assistance options that are now available to domestic students (i.e. scholarships) to foreign students as an incentive to study in the province.

More funding for ESL programs. Funding is needed for enhanced ESL services. This is especially important for illiterate immigrants and others who need more than the two years of English language training currently available.

Enhanced/improved prior learning recognition and assessment. A more comprehensive and coordinated prior learning assessment mechanism is needed. Something must be done to improve the recognition of foreign credentials and work experience so that highly trained immigrants are not prevented from contributing their skills. The focus should be to "recognize', not "re-educate" or "re-work". There are certain Alberta institutions that could be a specialty centre for prior learning recognition, given their high level of experience in this area. There was one proposal to lead a Campus Alberta Initiative in prior learning and immigrant education.

Coordination of services. There is a clear need for coordination of language, career development, cultural and social services that benefit immigrant and foreign students. Partnerships between provincial and federal government, industry and post-secondary institutions could create a more efficient, supportive suite of supports.

Leverage federal resources. It was suggested that Alberta lobby the federal government for more funding for immigration.

Theme 5: Innovation and excellence

Many respondents highlighted the need to enhance Alberta's capacity for innovation and high quality research. It was noted that any attempted definition of quality of the advanced education system should include innovation and excellence as a principle, on par with accessibility and affordability.

Challenges to innovation and excellence:

Minimal role of colleges and technical institutes in research. Stakeholders noted that there is a need to recognize and encourage an increased role for the college and technical institute sector in research and innovation. However some pointed out that encouraging research should not detract, to any extent, from excellence in instruction and teaching.

Private sector. One stakeholder argued that the private sector tends to focus on short-term profitability as opposed to long-term sustainability and that this is less conducive to a culture of collaborative innovation and research.

Difficulty with attraction and retention. Many stakeholders identified challenges in developing, attracting, and retaining highly qualified people. It was put forward that the participation and completion rate in graduate studies needs to be increased dramatically. Additionally, many believed a corresponding challenge will be in attracting and retaining an adequate level of faculty.

Suggested strategies to improve innovation and excellence:

Incentives. A few stakeholders suggested tax incentives or other measures to encourage industry to engage in research and innovation partnering with the advanced education system. Additionally, these stakeholders advocated offering incentives for companies to donate equipment used for research and innovation purposes to advanced education providers.

Improved coordination. Others believed organizations like the Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes (AACTI) have a central role to play in coordinating research and innovation activities. One stakeholder applauded the creation of the Lois Hole Campus Alberta Digital library and argued that similar approaches foster system wide excellence and should be encouraged.

Improvement in student planning processes. Individualized program planning for students could foster excellence for traditionally underrepresented learners. Additionally, some argued for underrepresented group representation in instructional and program design.

Increased focus on graduate students. Some stakeholders believed increased recognition of the value of graduate students is in order. They argued for increased recruitment strategies for both grad students and faculty. Some stakeholders wanted to see an increase in direct graduate student support including scholarships, fellowships, and bursaries.

Program review. One stakeholder suggested a broad review leading to an inventory of programs. This review would be aimed at increasing efficiency and lessening program duplication.

Role of colleges/technical institutes. Some stakeholders suggested that research be recognized as a core function of colleges and technical institutes and should be funded accordingly.

Theme 6: Community-based learning

It is important that learning opportunities are available within rural communities. This is particularly important for underrepresented groups given "it is easier to build confidence and aspirations at the community level where Community Adult Learning Councils can provide personal support". Stakeholders also pointed to the importance of an educated, skilled workforce to community economy. Also repeatedly noted was the importance of strong connections between industry and other community stakeholders within the advanced education system.

Challenges to community-based learning:

Out-migration of rural learners. It is important for rural/remote learners to have access to advanced education close to home, within their own community. There is a concern that attracting rural students to advanced education may mean drawing them out of their hometown and may further contribute to community decline. The focus should not be on attracting students away from their home. There should be a way of bringing post-secondary opportunities to rural Alberta.

Low availability of professional programs in communities. Some stakeholders feel the need for learners to relocate to urban areas to access professional programs such as law, medicine and social work is inappropriate, especially given the need for these social service-related occupations in rural communities.

Absence of a learning culture. Concern was raised over the lack of a culture of learning in Alberta, especially in smaller communities. There is high need to raise the profile of learning opportunities available in communities, as well as to create further opportunities.

Funding challenges. Institutions in rural and remote communities need funding to reflect their needs. For example, many communities serve a student population with increased needs. Also, in many cases, technology has to be available to deliver courses/programs via distance. Lack of funding for equipment needs at some smaller institutions is also a concern.

Suggested strategies to enhance community-based learning

Funding for rural students to remain in their community. The suggestion was made to provide grants for rural students who remain in their local towns and study via distance. The community would benefit because students could work, and continue contributing to the community, while going to school.

Centres of excellence. As well as providing opportunities for rural learners to complete education in their own communities, it is also important to encourage other Albertans to pursue opportunities in rural areas. Centres of excellence/specialization at rural colleges were noted as a good means of attracting students to rural areas and a way to enhance economic and quality of life in communities. Some suggested that the creation of centres of excellence within smaller communities would also serve as a basis to attract and retain professionals as well as students within smaller communities.

Community development, "learning culture" approach. There needs to be a learning culture fostered within communities. This would be particularly beneficial for learners with barriers. The learning culture would include the promotion of different programs within existing community institutions. As part of the community development approach, rural colleges need to be recognized as catalysts for community development. Colleges have a role in raising awareness, and in delivery.

Increased access to programs in rural communities. Programs like medicine, law and social work need to be made available within smaller communities. This may mean investing in new programs within the e-learning/distance education model. Also necessary are further opportunities for four-year degree completion in smaller institutions. Given the changing profile of learners, diverse and flexible routes through post-secondary also need to be available, especially within smaller communities. This may include access to basic education services, part-time opportunities, e-learning, and classes at flexible times.

Funding for education providers. In order for institutions, particularly rural institutions, to offer high quality learning opportunities locally, increased government funding must be provided. Developing a funding strategy for community providers to upgrade their equipment was highlighted as a key priority. As well, rural learners need access to an equivalent level of technology available to urban institutions. Given remote locations of some institutions, the most up-to-date technology is essential. Also suggested was a modified funding formula that is more responsive to population growth and that gives institutions the ability to respond to economic needs.

Create more campuses and access to specific services. Some respondents felt it would be a benefit to create more campuses/outreach centres in remote areas to meet certain purposes. These small campuses could be either permanent or temporary depending on community needs. Campuses would not only serve as educational centres but, also as local gathering points. Another suggestion was raised to establish learning brokers /facilitators in smaller communities. Professionals could bring together groups and broker in distance learning opportunities from anywhere in the world.

Regional access plans and learning centres. Other respondents felt it would be a good idea to develop regional adult learning access plans, with local stakeholders (including education providers) playing a key role in developing these plans. Regional learning centres were noted as the ultimate goal.

Mentorship programs. Many stakeholders highlighted the value of investing in community mentorship programs. Programs could bridge a connection between industry partners and students in relevant trades and other professional areas. Students would have access to practical experience with local industry and in turn, local businesses could attract/retain skilled workers. Strong connections to their communtiy and relevancy of educational expericences are particularly important for underrepresented groups (i.e. Aboriginal learners). Increased co-op expericences were also suggested and could potentially offer many of the same benefits as mentorship experiences.

Self-sufficiency, focus on community issues. Communities need the resources to research local issues. Right now, research is concentrated in urban areas. It would be a good idea to create a research fund that would focus on northern and rural issues. As part of this initiative, all research would have to be done with a rurally based partner, and larger institutions would be encouraged to include scholars, etc. from rural institutions. Another respondent suggested that community issues could be the focus of some learning modules and work could be done with Aboriginal people in communities to understand issues.

Partnerships. A number of stakeholders noted the importantce of the formation of partnerships among a variety of stakeholders. Support is needed to foster collaboration and partnerships between rural and urban institutions so that programs are not duplicated and resources are used effieciently. Increased affiliation agreements were also suggested. Industry, institutions and government need to work together to foster benefits within the community. For example, tax incentives for businesses who choose to donate equipment to colleges may be an idea to explore. Sharing of facilities between K-12 and post-secondary should be considered when possible. As well, stakeholders noted that there may be a need to review and reframe the role of educational consortia for the new advanced learning system. Finally, if collaboration within communities is to succeed, government needs to support innovative partnerships financially.

Theme 7: Funding

Stakeholders raised many suggestions for funding or investing in the advanced education system. Suggestions included increases to base operating grants, support of a funding formula to determine operating grants, and the creation of new grants for educational providers to account for changing technologies and improved infrastructure and equipment.

Challenges to funding:

Tuition rebate. A few stakeholders raised the issue that the Alberta Centennial Tuition rebate will become a challenge in 2006-07. They felt a large funding commitment will be needed to account for natural growth in education costs to keep tuition affordable.

Current incentive structure. Stakeholders argued funding mechanisms and investment strategies should provide fair and reasonable incentives for all institutions. Some believed it would be a challenge to create proper incentive funding mechanisms accepted by all institutions without pitting institutions against each other for funding.

Need for individual recognition (institutions). Some stakeholders said that recognizing institutions' own unique sets of circumstances with proper funding mechanisms is a significant challenge facing government. Others believed performance funding based on the previous years' performance is limiting as it does not encourage under-performing institutions to improve from year to year.

Competing initiatives. Some cautioned that funding for a variety of new activities, including funded research at the college and technical institute level, will present challenges and issues. For example, there is a need to ensure funding research does not impact on quality of teaching.

Infrastructure. Many stakeholders argued that increasing accessibility means updating the infrastructure capacity at many institutions. Additionally, adequately supporting learners with up-to-date equipment and technology was seen as a challenge.

Suggested strategies to improve funding:

Funding for institutions. Many agreed that sustainable and predictable funding is needed to allow institutions to plan properly for the future. Other noted the importance of reviewing funding formulas in light of changing institutional mandates. Providing increased and targeted financial support to rural colleges based on their unique circumstances was repeatedly highlighted. Also, there was the suggestion that rural institutions could be used to offer specialized programming (i.e. oil sands related technology at Keyano) and serve interested students/learners from across the province. Incentives could be offered to offset additional costs.

Operating grants. One stakeholder suggested Alberta should be number one in Canada in base operating grants to institutions in consideration of the Alberta Advantage. They believed operating grants should be increased each year until that goal is reached.

Predictability. Many stakeholders wanted increased certainty of base funding. Many applauded the Alberta government's funding increase of 18 per cent in base operating grants over the next three years (six per cent each year). However, in most cases they wanted to see funding commitments extended to five years to allow for improved financial planning at the institutional level.

Access to the Future Fund. Many stakeholders suggested using the Access to the Future Fund as a matching endowment fund to encourage and add to institutional fundraising capacity. One stakeholder suggested the establishment of an endowment fund for applied research

Performance funding. Other stakeholders argued for an increased pool of performance envelope funding to serve as an effective tool to leverage change. Others thought the performance envelope needs to be reorganized and should involve rewards for innovation and excellence in instructional design and program delivery.

Access Fund. Other stakeholders argued that Access Funding should be allocated so enrolment increases are fully funded, across all program types, including English as a Second Language (ESL) training. Another stakeholder suggested replacing the Access Fund with a funding formula that fully funds institutions for all enrolment growth across all program types in addition to base operating grants.

New funding formula. A few respondents argued for the creation of formula-driven base funding, which recognizes the uniqueness of costs and circumstances facing institutions.

Investment in research and innovation. Some stakeholders suggested increased government investment in research and innovation activities, particularly within the colleges and technical institute sector. Additionally, some stakeholders argued for the creation of specific funds, or increases in operating grants, to better recruit and retain faculty and international students.

Infrastructure. Many stakeholders wanted a one-time funding infusion to deal with infrastructure and capital problems. Additionally, some stakeholders felt deferred maintenance should be funded in operating grants to institutions.

Increased federal assistance. Many stakeholders argued for increased lobbying of the federal government of Canada to create a post-secondary transfer dedicated to improving advanced education nationally.